ER. ROOM

Letter from Taizé

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September - October 1984

The Meeting in Colonia
Church, land of reconciliation
Meditating the Word
Meetings in Poland
News

COLOGNE

A step in the worldwide pilgrimage of reconciliation

December 28 - January 1

A young person writes from Cologne,« Last year at the European Meeting in Paris, we lived in a parish that was incredibly alive and we were made so welcome. How can we prepare a similar welcome here, even though we sometimes feel a little isolated ? »

The young people of Cologne prepare a welcome.

The parishes and families of Cologne and the surrounding region will be welcoming young people from all over Europe, with their search for peace and reconciliation, with their desire to alleviate suffering in the world. And they will help them to discover the places of hope in their city. Some young people wrote from Cologne:

Hearing that the European Meeting would take place here, I wondered, in alight alarm, where can all these people stay ? Cologne isn't that big ! But then I thought to myself, even in my own parish there are already so many possibilities, houses and families.I hope that during the preparation we can advance towards reconciliation, particularly between the generations...It is hopeful when young people and the not so young tell each other how they live their faith. »

« Since the meeting in Cologne two years ago we haven't stopped. We have kept in touch with a lot of people that we didn't know before the meeting. For example, some young people went to a lot of trouble collecting paper for recycling in order to earn enough to give an icon to the Arab-Orthodox church in our area. Before Christmas, we sent the icon day after day from family to family, and we brought it to the church on Christmas Eve. It was in the homes of old people, families, and people who are alone...Many were surprised that it is possible to transmit something in such a simple manner. Among them were many people who are not regular participants in Sunday celebrations. »

« I am part of the parish council. The European meeting will certainly concern us. The various groups will be well informed. Then we will find the courage to go out and visit everyone. »

« I hope that before and after the meeting, contact with the foreigners in our area will be possible. For our group the time of preparation is a challenge to try new things and to shake up a little the life of the parish. »

« In my school I want to prepare the meeting particularly with people who do not always accept the Church and also with foreigners. All have something to offer in the welcome. »

« At first I was disappointed that this time the meeting would take place in Cologne ; for me it was very important to go away for the European meetings. But disappointment turned to joy, because this year I can contribute towards the creation of such a sign here, I can return a little of what has been given to me at the other meetings. Above all, what I received there was the experience of not being a stranger in a foreign land. »

Local preparations.

What this European meeting requires is a preparation not just in Cologne but in each place. It may also involve people who will not be going to the meeting. This preparation can take place in times of prayer and exchange in each place, so that each person begins the "pilgrimage of reconciliation" at home.
During the summer in Taizé the preparation began. The questions which were used can be taken up again in groups during the autumn, in parishes and movements in each country. Here are some of the questions:

reater solidarity in our neighbourhood.

Throughout five days in Cologne, meeting for rayer together in the cathedral and other churches, nd taking part in the life of the parishes and eighbourhoods, we will share our experiences of liv- ıg out in our daily lives what we have grasped of ıe Gospel.

— How can I prepare myself, alone and with others, to be welcomed in Cologne and to share the experience of the Christians there ?

— What can be done, from now, so that the weeks leading up to Cologne be a time of living a greater sense of solidarity in our area, and communion in our local Church ?

" At first I had mixed feelings regarding the meeting and its prepara- on. Would we just be living five days of euphoria ? But with time I alised that the meeting would be very much linked with the everyday nd often hidden life of my parish. So it is a good chance to involve all the enerations in the preparation. "

he local Church, a place of welcome.

Gathering together young people from all over urope, the European meeting in Cologne will be like parable of the " Call to the Churches ": " Church, ecome what you are in your depths,a land of the ving, a land of reconciliation, a land of simplicity. " See the February Letter from Taizé.)

— How can we respond to this appeal with others, in our group, in our church, or in our movement ?

— What already exists that corresponds to the " Call to the Churches " ? And how can we stimulate an effort to make the local Church a place of welcome ?

" Even in my totally " ordinary " parish, there are so many activities and different groups that you can really get going and make a string of visits. There is no end to wonder when one tries to grasp what others are doing. This was what I found recently in our parish on getting to know the old-age group and the prayer group. "
(On page 3 there is a biblical meditation on the Church which would make it possible to go further with these questions from another angle.)

Commitments within everyone's reach.

The " worldwide pilgrimage of reconciliation " is not made up only of big international meetings. It leads us to taking commitments that are within our reach, in our daily life.

— How can our home become a place of welcome and sharing, a place where it is possible to stay in silence in God's presence ?

— How can we awaken the pastoral gift which God has placed to a greater or lesser extent in each person ?

— How can we live out the universality of the Church and thus sense also the universality of God's love ?

— How can we find in God the creative energy we need in order to work to reduce human suffering throughout the world ?

— How can we be ferments of trust and peace when so many events in and around us stand in the way, and how can we even build with them ?

REGISTRATION FORM

To be filled in by all participants, and to be sent, before 1st December to :
EUROPEAN MEETING, F - 71250 TAIZÉ-COMMUNAUTÉ.

AME :

IRST NAME :

DDRESS :

(with post code and country)

el.: ...../..... Age : .....

ease circle 'yes' or 'no' to show which applies :

ill make my own way to Cologne ..... yes / no

herwise : I will be joining the group going from the town of : .....

leader's name : .....

ill arrive in Cologne on December 28th ..... yes / no

ill arrive on Dec.26th for the preparation teams ..... yes / no

eceive the LETTER from TAIZE regularly ..... yes / no

ould like ..... additional forms and information

help us prepare accommodation,please circle what applies to you:

			family		disabled
man	man	couple	with children	with	helper

Programme : participation in the life of the districts and local church communities of Cologne and neighbouring towns; prayer together twice a day in Cologne Cathedral and other churches ; workshops and meetings in small groups ; (possibility,for those who wish, to spend the 5 days in silence.)

Registration : send your form in before December 1st . Those hoping to organise a group to go to the meeting are asked to let us know even if nothing is certain (give estimate of numbers by Nov.15th)

Arrival : Friday morning December 28th between 7am and 12 noon (and not before, except the preparation teams)

Departure : Tuesday afternoon January 1st , from 3pm onwards

Age : the meeting is intended mainly for young adults, 17 years old and above. Young people under 17: only if accompanied by their parents or a group leader. Families and adults 30† yrs. participate with younger people in all the meetings, they should arrive on Dec. 28th,not before.

Accommodation : with families,in church halls,or with religious communities. Essential to bring air-mattress and sleeping-bag. Separate dormitories for boys and girls.

Cost : Pay on arrival in Deutsch Marks. Those whose currency is strong help those who come from countries with weaker currencies, or whose government prevents them from taking money out of the country. Price for English-speaking people and Scandinavians : between 70 and 80 DM. This includes meals and a travel pass on public transport.

Preparation teams :(possibility restricted to those who are 17 to 30 years) Those who can help with the work for the meeting (welcome, kitchen, music, etc.) or animation, should arrive on Dec.26th, and indicate this on their registration forms.

Travel from Britain and Ireland : People from the same region arrange among themselves to get a group train ticket or to hire a mini-bus or coach.(We cannot organise accommodation for coach drivers in Cologne). Special coaches for the Cologne meeting will be run by Frank Harris Coaches Ltd., Manor Road, West Thurrock, Grays, Essex RM16 1EH. tel:Purfleet (04026) 4911. London-Cologne return: Youth (up to 26 years): £40, Adult £51. You can also get tickets from other parts of Britain. (Book before Dec. 15th)

PERIOD
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Never in any period of history have the links unifying the man family been as numerous as today. One can be almost intly informed of events taking place at the other side of the be. Contacts between people and cultures are increasing anks to communications and also to the ever-increasing numbers people who do not live in their native lands. It is clear that nomic problems can only be solved globally.

" CHURCH, LAND OF RECONCILIATION "

While the idea of the " human family " is becoming less and s abstract, certain aspects of the Gospel are seeing new light of y.

e first Christians were sure that Christ had come for all people d that the forgiveness of God was for all: " It was pleasing to d to reconcile all beings by Christ, whether on earth or in aven, by making peace on the cross. " (Col.1.20) It becomes posle to understand the enormity of this reconciliation to the extent ich the world we know has grown.

A worldwide pilgrimage of reconciliation means placing ourses within that perspective and trying to understand the meaning the presence of the Risen Lord in all places. Setting out to meet se near and far who differ from us in age, origin, confession, igion, culture, means discovering ways, which, from turning in one's self, lead towards Christ. In him, God unites the whole iverse. (Eph 1.10) He identifies himself with the abandoned, h those who suffer separations: " Whatever you have done for e of these, the least of my brothers, you have done for me. " att 25.40)

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ie people of God

In the Bible, pilgrimages are special moments of celebration together. The joy of being the people of God breaks out. It is the occasion to receive the peace which comes from God. (cf. Psalm 122) As we belong to this people, we are never left in isolation. When we come together in pilgrimage, and when we celebrate together, we receive those realities that we hope for: trust between people, peace.

God offers a visible communion in his people. e communion of the Church is born out of the love Christ, of the supreme gift of his love. The narrae of his last supper with the disciples, which is an age of the Church, is introduced by the words: esus, having so loved his own who were in the rld, now showed them the full extent of his love. » hn 13.1) In giving his life for them, he put his own e in their hearts ; from now on he will be recoged through his presence in them. Foretelling his th, Jesus says," I give you a new commandment, love one another as I have loved you. " (John 34) He did not want his disciples to look back with talgia on his life on earth. To them he confides nething new: being witnesses by their love, " All will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. " (John 13.35) Through the community of believers, the Risen Lord makes himself visibly present on earth.

At the same time as this commandment, Jesus entrusted the Eucharist to his disciples, a gift always renewed by his presence. Jesus gives what he asks for: above all he loves with an unconditional love. He loved Peter, who at a particular moment, unable to reply to the love of Christ, would deny knowing him. He loved all the disciples who would abandon him. From its very beginnings, the Church is not made up of perfect people who would find in themselves alone the strength to love as Christ loves. Nevertheless, it is by the Church that Christ wants to be known.

The Church is a land of reconciliation when she is a witness of forgiveness. To be a pilgrim of reconciliation means first of all understanding that Christ puts great trust in his disciples without judging them, and it means, by his example, refusing to judge anyone, especially those who are like Peter. Being a pilgrim of reconciliation means not fleeing difficult situations, in the Church or elsewhere, even when indifference or suspicion seem to be the response to the best of one's intentions. Land of forgiveness, the community of believers can become a place where those of all origins who are seeking reconciliation can halt and renew their strength and courage.

Being sent out

Loving as Christ loved is also coming out of oneself, being sent as he was sent. To love humankind, Jesus " came from God " (John 13.3).
Instead of keeping for himself that with which he had been filled since all time, he became a servant.

While Jesus was travelling around Palestine, he did not always keep the disciples with him. " He appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him, two by two, to every town and every place that he was to go to. He said to them, the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few ; pray to the Master of the harvest to send out labourers in to his harvest. " (Luke 10.1-2)

This way, everywhere Jesus went, the way was prepared. Once he rose again, he became present throughout the earth. The task of his disciples has remained the same: going out ahead of him, not to carry out something that would be beyond them, but to be witnesses of Him who is coming himself. Knowing that his disciples are poor and " little children " (Luke 10.21), Jesus sends them out in twos. Nobody has very much, perhaps he still doubts, or does not feel ready yet, but going two by two, trust becomes possible. Jesus had sent " seventy-two others ". " Seventy-two " is a traditional number to represent the number of all the peoples. It is because Jesus wants to visit them all. " Others " refers to the twelve apostles: it was not just them who received the task of going ahead of Christ, but many others too.

" I send you out like sheep among wolves " (Luke 10.3), says Jesus. Pilgrims, we aren't strong, but all of us, wherever we be, are asked to come out of ourselves, first of all to listen, and to accompany those with whom we share our daily lives, and also to face difficult situations.

Lord Christ,
the little that we understand of the Gospel
is just enough to fulfill ourselves in the present moment.
For you never make us people who have arrived,
but rather seekers of the Spirit of God.
Day after day,
enable us to prepare ourselves, in all simplicity, to trust in you :
that is maybe all that we can do
to penetrate the mystery of faith.

Prayer by Brother Roger.

The two following pages present two sibilities for meditating the Word of and going to the sources of faith :

A Bible text is suggested for each day reading for the midday prayer in é). It is short enough to be memorised ead over several times during the day. reference gives the passage from ch the short text is taken and which is d in Taizé either in the morning or the ning .

An introduction presents several pters ot the Bible (read in Taizé during same period). It may be useful to read e chapters in an edition of the Bible ch has explanatory notes. Above all, 't be hindered by what you do not un- tand on a first reading. Each day, it is ugh to find a few words, even a single d, to linger on and underline. Later the sages that you have underlined will d light on other more difficult ones that did not grasp at first sight.

For September: the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians

The letter which Paul writes to the Ephesians from prison tries to make them understand " what is the length and breadth, the height and depth " (Ephesians 3.18): it reveals all the dimensions of the mystery of Christ, as vast as the dimensions of the universe. God " brings the whole universe together in Christ " (1.10).

This principal theme is brought out in three aspects: God has forgiven, he has given his life in union with Christ (2.1-10) ; Christ is our peace, having destroyed the powers of division, particularly hatred, by the gift of his life (2.11-22) ; thus the " mystery of Christ " comes to light, for it is he that is the meaning and the hidden goal of all creation (3.1-13). And the Church is the Body of Christ, completely filled with him (1.23). Through her, " the infinite wisdom of God is known throughout the universe " (3.10)

In chapters 4-6 the daily life of the believers is put in the light of the reality which has just been described. " Urging " (4.1) means encouraging to live out what we already are through our union with Christ, to seek unity, as there is " but one Body (the Body of Christ, the Church) and one Spirit " (4.4).

« Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God » (4.30) are the words which sum up these chapters: as the Spirit does everything in us, we must not disregard its presence but welcome it in our daily life. Receiving the Spirit of God means being forgiving. Anyone who forgives acts like God himself (4.32). The Spirit praying in us, with which the letter started, is the source of perseverance: " In all circumstances, persevere in prayer, in the Spirit. " (6.18)

ember 1984

With everlasting love I have compassion u, says the Lord your Redeemer.
Isaiah 54.7-10

2 Jesus said: If anyone wants to follow me, m renounce himself, take up his cross, and me. *Matthew 16.21-27*

3 Paul wrote:You were included in Christ you heard the word of truth, the good news ur salvation ; and having believed, you were ed with the Holy Spirit of the Promise.
Ephesians 1.11 -14

4 Jesus said: If anyone gives so much as a f cold water to one of these little ones who is ciple, I tell you the truth, he will not lose his d. *Matthew 10.37-42*

5 Paul wrote: The Church is the body of , the fullness of the one who fills all creation.
Ephesians 1. 20-23

6 The word that issues from my mouth not return without accomplishing what it was o do, says the Lord. *Isaiah 55. 10-13*

Christ is our peace. In his person, he has yed hatred, the wall that separates.
Ephesians 2.12-18

Thus says the Lord: Love the foreigners you as yourself. *Leviticus 19.33-34*

Jesus said: If two or three are gathered in me, I am there in their midst.
Matthew 18. 15-20

10 I will live in your midst, says the Lord, I ur God, I have broken the yoke that bound d have made you able to walk with head gh. *Leviticus 26.11-13*

Tues 11 Paul wrote: I have been entrusted with proclaiming to the nations the immeasureable treasures of Christ and to make plain to everyone the plan of the mystery which was hidden for ages in God. *Ephesians 3.7-13*

Wed 12 May Christ live in your hearts through faith ; may you be rooted and grounded in love.
Ephesians 3.14-21

Thurs 13 With all lowliness and meekness ; be patient, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. *Ephesians 4.1-6*

Fri 14 Jesus said: Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven, is my brother, sister and mother. *Matthew 12.46-50*

Sat 15 You will seek the Lord your God, and you will find him, if you search for him with all your heart and all your soul. *Deuteronomy 4.29-31*

Sun 16 Paul wrote: Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. *Romans 14.7-9*

Mon 17 Paul wrote: Let your words be helpful for building others up according to their needs, and do good to your listeners. *Ephesians 4.25-29*

Tues 18 Paul wrote: Forgive one another as God in Christ forgave you, imitate God as children of his that he loves. *Ephesians 4.30-5.2*

Wed 19 Moses said to the people: If the Lord set his heart on you and chose you, it was not because you out-number other peoples: you are the least of all peoples. It is out of love for you.
Deuteronomy 7.7-9

Thurs 20 Jesus said: The kingdom of God is like leaven which a woman took and mixed in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.
Matthew 13.31-35

Fri 21 ST MATTHEW, APOSTLE and EVANGELIST
As Jesus was walking he saw a man named Matthew sitting by the customs house, and he said to him, « Follow me ! » And he got up and followed him. *Matthew 9.9-13*

Sat 22 Paul wrote: Pray at all times in the Spirit ; live in prayer and supplication. *Ephesians 6.14-18*

Sun 23 Paul wrote: Stand firm, one in mind and spirit, striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel. *Philippians 1.20-27*

Mon 24 Do not harden your heart or be tight-fisted toward your poor neighbour, but give to him according to his needs. *Deuteronomy 15.7-11*

Tues 25 God comforts us in all our troubles, so that in any trouble, we can offer others the consolation that we have received from God ourselves.
2 Corinthians 1.1-6

Wed 26 Paul wrote: Overburdened to the point of despair, we learnt to rely not on ourselves but only on God, who raises the dead to life.
2 Corinthians 1.7-11

Thurs 27 Paul wrote: We do not want to be masters of your faith, but fellow workers with you for your joy. *2 Corinthians 1.18-24*

Fri 28 Tell out the greatness of our God ! He is the Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. *Deuteronomy 32.1-4*

Sat 29 Paul wrote: Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. *2Corinthians 3.16-18*

Sun 30 Paul wrote: Let nobody put his own interests first, but let everyone think of others first.
Philippians 2.1-5

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Mon 1 Paul wrote: God has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit ; for the written code kills and the Spirit gives life. *2 Corinthians 3.1-8*

Tue 2 Let us press on to know the Lord, for his coming is as sure as the dawn ; he will come to us as the spring rains that water the earth. *Hosea 6.1-6*

Wed 3 We are in difficulties on all sides, but never crushed ; perplexed but not in despair. *2 Corinthians 4.6-12*

Thu 4 We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. *2 Corinthians 4.13-16*

Fri 5 On the mountain of the Transfiguration a bright cloud covered the disciples with shadow and a voice said: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him. *Matthew 17.1-8*

Sat 6 Paul wrote: We are going by faith and not by clear sight. *2 Corinthians 4.17-18, 5.7*

Sun 7 Let nothing worry you, but in everything, by prayer with thanksgiving, make your petition to the Lord. *Philippians 4.6-9*

Mon 8 Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation ; the old has gone, the new has come. *2 Corinthians 5.13-17*

Tue 9 God has reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of reconciliation. *2 Corinthians 5.18-21*

Wed 10 God does not see with human vision. Man looks at appearances but the Lord looks to the heart. *1 Samuel 16.1-12*

Thu 11 Paul wrote: We are taken for sorrowful, yet we are always rejoicing ; as having nothing, yet we have everything. *2 Corinthians 6.3-10*

Fri 12 Paul wrote: We were struggling outside, and frightened within ; but God comforted us, as he comforts all the downcast. *2 Corinthians 7.5-7*

Sat 13 The Lord delivers me from enemies too strong for me ; he freed me, he set me at large. *2 Samuel 22. 17-20*

Sun 14 The Lord will lift away the veil of mourning that enfolds all the peoples, the shroud that covers the nations. He will swallow up death forever. *Isaiah 25.6-9*

Mon 15 Paul wrote of the first Christian communities: Throughout great trials of suffering their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. *2 Corinthians 8.1-5*

Tue 16 Be generous, for you know the generosity of our Lord Jesus Christ, who became poor for your sakes. *2 Corinthians 8.7-15*

Wed 17 Jesus said to a man: If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you own and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven ; then come and follow me. *Matthew 19.13-22*

Thu 18 Jesus said: The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few ; so pray that the Master of the harvest may send labourers into his harvest. *Luke 10.1-9*

Fri 19 Jesus said: Anyone who leaves houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or land, in my name, will receive much more and will inherit eternal life. *Matthew 19.27-30*

Sat 20 The Lord says: I will pour forth my spirit on all mankind. *Joel 3.1,5*

Sun 21 The Lord says: I called you by your name even though you did not know me. *Isaiah 45.2-4*

Mon 22 The Lord says: My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in your weakness. *2 Corinthians 12.7-10*

Tue 23 Jesus said: Whoever would be great among you, will become your servant. *Matthew 20.25-28*

Wed 24 I lift up my eyes to the hills ; where will help come from ? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. *Psalm 120*

Thu 25 If you, O Lord, should remember all our sins, who would survive ? But with you there is forgiveness ; I adore you and hope in you. *Psalm 129*

Fri 26 This is what the Lord asks of you: nothing more than to do justice and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. *Micah 6.6-8*

Sat 27 Who is a God like you, O Lord, pardoning sin and delighting in steadfast love ? *Micah 7.18-20*

Sun 28 Paul wrote: You are imitating the Lord in welcoming the Word with the joy of the Holy Spirit in the midst of many trials. *1 Thessalonians 1.5-10*

Mon 29 Thus says the Lord: I will give all the peoples pure lips that they may all call on the name of the Lord. *Zephaniah 3.9-10*

Tue 30 Your God is in your midst. He will rejoice for you with joy, he will renew you with his love. *Zephaniah 3.14-18*

For October: Chapters 16 to 20 of the Gospel of Matthew

Jesus withdrew with his disciples and asked them, " Who do you say that I am ? " (Matthew 16.15). Their answer is a turning-point in the Gospel: the recognition of Peter and the disciples that this is the Christ, the Son of the living God. They realise that he has everything in common with God, and so Jesus can speak openly to them about the path which will lead him to the cross. He can also speak to them about the time which will follow his resurrection, when they will form the community of believers, the Church. The transfiguration of Jesus (17.1-8) lets those who believe glimpse what he really is: the splendour of God.

The way of Jesus: " The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men "(17.22). He puts himself forward, defenceless, before his fellow humans, trusting that God will not abandon him. The disciples will follow the same path, " Whoever loses his life because of me will find it. " (16.25, see 19.27-29).

The Church is a land of the living, the powers of death can do nothing against her (16.18). Peter,who has professed his faith, receives the keys of the Kingdom: Jesus' message is entrusted to him so that he will make sure that the Kingdom of God be always open to all and not closed by a burdensome teaching. (see 23.4,13).

Chapter 18 gathers together what Jesus had said about the community of believers. He is present everywhere where believers are gathered (18.20). He asks that we look after the small and be ready to forgive. The Church is the place where the forgiveness of God is communicated (18.18). If everyone would seek to be servant rather than be served, that way the community of believers can be the visible announcement of a new reality, of a true communion between the nations (20.24-28).

MEETINGS IN POLAND

Nearly three hundred Poles, from different towns, were able to take part in the European meeting in Paris. Here are some accounts of meetings which took place in Poland in the months following:

In Katowice

On their return to Poland, some young people of Katowice went to see their bishop to tell him what had happened in Paris. The bishop asked them to tell other young people of the town about it. So one Sunday after the Mass, in the students' church where young people from all over the city come to pray, several young people presented different aspects of the meeting in Paris.

One girl said, " In Paris we were enriched by dialogue with so many people. The barriers of language and viewpoint dissappeared and we met in a spirit of unity and love. " A boy emphasised the cordial welcome which the Poles received in the parishes of Paris: " It was not just curiosity, there was great concern for us. Also, Brother Roger spoke several times of our presence saying that it was announcing a springtime of the Church. I'm bringing this news back to you, " said the boy, to the two thousand gathered in the cathedral of Katowice, " so that we might reflect on how to reply to this expectation. " The bishop finished by thanking the young people for the witness they had brought back from Paris and for the spiritual enrichment they carried with them.

The outcome of that Sunday was that various parishes of Katowice invited participants of the Paris meeting to come to speak in their groups and to introduce the Letter from Haiti. Every Monday there is a meditative prayer in the student church.

In Szczecin

To enable continuity after the Paris meeting, a week-end of prayer and reflection took place in Szezecin on the Baltic. The young people there were not able to go to Paris. On the other hand, a large group went from there to Rome for Palm Sunday to take part in the Youth Jubilee for the close of the Holy Year. In Rome the group was welcomed in the place where, throughout the Holy Year, Taizé and young people of the parishes of Rome welcomed young people from the Eastern countries. There the idea of a meeting in Szczecin arose: to arrange an occasion to meet again in our own city, in the context of our daily lives.

At the beginning of our meeting we brought to mind some of the words the Pope addressed to us in Rome," To live humanly today, we need superhuman strength ". To live humanly in the situation in our country means being a ferment of trust where suspicion is setting in, it means keeping up hope when everything is provoking resignation, it means bringing joy where sadness weighs people down, it means resisting falsehood when acting for the good, and speaking the truth even when it costs dearly.

We have been searching on the question of where to tap the " super-human strength " to put all that into practice. It was more from the prayer than the discussions that we found an answer. We also found answers in visits to some of the places of suffering and hope that there are in Szczecin. One group went to visit a Carmel, the one and only place of contemplation in our town. Some sisters there radiate joy while living under difficult circumstances. Inside the cloister they seem to be more in touch with the sufferings of humanity than many who live in daily confrontation with sufferings. Some others went to visit a house for single mothers built out in the countryside. With devotion and joy, two sisters and another young woman are doing everything possible to make a welcoming place in the fairly rudimentary conditions of a poor and still rather suspicious village.

In Lublin

One week later, another meeting took place in south-east Poland in Lublin, a city known for having the only Catholic university in the countries of Eastern Europe. The meeting was prepared over a long time by the parishes, the student chaplains and different leaders of movements. They set about welcoming the young people coming from other towns and also looking for places of suffering and hope to visit.

The meeting began on a Friday night with the prayer around the cross. A lot of people, young and old, were to be found still in the church towards midnight.

On the Saturday, after the morning prayer we reflected on the " call to the Churches " in small groups. At midday we met in another church to pray the angelus. Then we read the Gospel of Mary's visit to Elizabeth to prepare ouselves for our visits that afternoon to places of suffering and hope: hospitals, homes for old people, and for abandoned children...One of the places we visited was the Catholic university where a group of professors received some of the participants. That evening we had a Paschal vigil.

The Sunday morning, we took part in the Sunday celebrations in the different parishes and groups in the town which gave us an opportunity to meet people who are committed in the life of the Church, social life, and culture. The final prayer on the Sunday afternoon took place in yet another church. We did not try to come to conclusions. On the contrary, we were saying to one another that the meeting should not come to an end, but that it was to continue in the following days, amid our usual life. And we were amazed as we realized that such a simple event could give us so much strength and lead us into hopefullness.

COLOMBIA

"To express something of what we are doing as a result of our communion with the Lord Jesus, I chose an experience which is close to the Letter from Haiti. For two years we have had a project with the young, called " Share ". Throughout the year, we put together money that each one has earned, and we put it towards helping a leprosarium which actually forms a town of 17,000. In December we go to spend the Christmas celebrations with the lepers of this town who are marginalised by the wounds of an ugly disease. We do not go there to give them the money ; it is to build a house for old people and a school. We go there to share their life, we help them in their ordinary work, and we support them in what they organise. And as it is Christmas, we discover the presence of the Lord in the sick. During the day, to establish contact with them, each of us choses the way which best suits their abilities. In the evening we come together to tell about the experiences had, and we review the day in the Lord's light and, in prayer, we return to him everything that happened. We are so marked by this that we return to the leprosarium every time that we have holidays, to share the life of the sick. May the Risen Jesus continue to be the inspiration of our commitment towards the alleviation of suffering throughout the world."

KENYA

Several brothers of the community are living in a very poor and unstable part of Nairobi, in a shack like those of their neighbours:

" Living from day to day is the plight of most of the people in our neighbourhood. As for us, being there, listening, praying in their midst, seems so much more important than the little help that we can, and must, offer to relieve the most miserable cases. Signs are more valuable than words: words are usually hardly understood.

Last Sunday, to create a sign of unity and reconciliation, we gathered the people of the area, with lots of children, in our shack. After a brief prayer we set off in torrid heat, on a pilgrimage from church to church in this part of Nairobi. We visited the Presbyterians, the Pentecostalists, the Mennonites, two Catholic parishes, carrying flowers for those waiting for us. We prayed with them, singing short responses which accompanied us everywhere. The meaning of a visit is so strong in Africa that everyone understood with hardly any explanations. Towards evening, we went back through the large neighbourhood with the tireless children running ahead. On the street was a little old lady, dancing her gratitude all alone, chanting our song.

Another Sunday, in the parish, we had a beautiful Mass for the Presentation of the Child Jesus. There were two doves, Joseph, Simeon, and Anne, true to life. A young mother's baby was placed on the altar, blessed and shown to everyone. Afterwards the baby was carried around and cuddled by the whole congregation, to show that the Child Jesus had come for everyone. As usual, the whole thing took place in joyful chaos, as the children jostled to touch and see... "

BRITAIN

Many people are struck during a stay at Taizé by the depth of the prayer, the beauty of the singing together. But to prepare a meditative prayer at home, maybe in one's own church, with people of all ages, presents a challenge which is not so easy to take up.

In the autumn in Britain there will be some meetings with the specific purpose of helping people to arrange and lead prayers in their own parishes or local communities. Competent musicians will lead the musical part of the meeting, to which much time will be devoted. All are welcome, not just those who have been to Taizé.

October 12-14: BRADFORD. Contact: Rev Roger Wood, Youth and Community Service, 2 The Wool Exchange, Bradford BD1 1LE. tel:(0274) 729727.

Sat. October 20: LONDON. St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Contact: Rev Philip Dixon, St Barnabas Vicarage, Everest Way, Andeyfield, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 4HY. tel: (0442) 53681.

November 16-18 : BIRMINGHAM.Contact: Fr Andy Quinn, Soli House, Mill Lane, Stratford-upon-Avon, WARKS CV37 6BJ. tel: (0789) 67011.(Either stay the weekend or come just for Sat 17)

BELGIUM

" To put into practice in Brussels something that we have understood of the worldwide pilgrimage of reconciliation, one Saturday afternoon we arranged a pilgrimage of children and young people to visit old people. At the start of the afternoon the children gathered. They were not just Belgian, but also some Portuguese and some little children from Zaire. Everyone brought flowers and a symbolic gift to give to the old people, and a snack for two people.

When we arrived at the house of the Little Sisters of the Poor, which is very welcoming, all the old people were waiting. The children started by explaining why they had come and how they saw this visit as living a commitment. Then we asked the old people to tell us about a happy memory from their childhood: one was a servant in a house ; another was a Spanish emigré, there was somebody from the Pacific islands, from China, the United States, and from Ireland...The children were listening carefully.

After that, we reflected on biblical texts that had been chosen on the theme of blessing and of praise. In the book of Genesis we read the story of the blessing that Jacob gave to his son and to his grand-sons, and then in the Gospel, the story of the presentation of the child Jesus,with the songs of praise of the aged Simeon and Anne. We saw that the spirit of praise was a source of reconciliation and of peace, not easy praise, but praise that is made possible because Christ has died and is risen.

That day we realised that living the worldwide pilgrimage of reconciliation locally was perhaps nothing more than showing openness to all the dimensions of the Church: between generations, between the sick and the well, between nationalities...It also meant looking with new eyes on this part of the city of Brussells. And several people expressed how, as it often happens, there had been a reversal: they thought they were going to meet the poor and they received treasure from them. "

ASIA

Several people have left Taizé to go to Madras to prepare, in cooperation with Indian Christians, the welcome for the meeting which will take place in the city of Madras in 1985. A prolonged preparation is necessary so that this important part of the worldwide pilgrimage may fit well into the life of the country.

In view of preparation in Asia for the meeting in Madras, meetings of young people are taking place this year not only in India, but also in Sri Lanka, in Bangkok, Singapore, Hong Kong, in the Philippines, Indonesia, Seoul, and Tokyo

" From country to country, " someone wrote, " whether in Asia or on another continent, the problems one meets are so great ! Certain problems are more and more unbearable, from that of the unemployed to that of workers working but no longer being paid, to the drug problem which is widespread in all the large towns, and broken families. Such situations cause discouragement. The economic crisis and the threat of war lead many young people to detachment. In the face of these problems, which we can call global, the perspective of a worldwide pilgrimage or of a world meeting strikes a chord with the young, for there is still expectation in their depths. To be able to prepare such events is like a challenge which evokes the hope of faith when faced with the influence of global pressures.

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